



Robe LEDBeam 150s are a Perfect Match for Baxter Theatre

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(left to right): Steyn, Julian Baeties and Benny Arendse.

Robe LEDBeam 150s are proving the perfect match for Cape Town's Baxter Theatre, where they are in use nearly every day, providing powerful, flexible and handy lighting solutions for all types of performance ... to the delight of the technical team.

The acclaimed Baxter Theatre has five performance spaces plus a garden, which is also used for shows, and is located in Cape Town's Rondebosch suburb on the edge of the University of Cape Town (UCT) campus. It is the second largest performing arts venue in the city - after the Artscape Theatre Centre - and has a vibrant programme embracing thought-provoking drama, dance, music and many other genres of live theatre and performance.

Purchasing the new Robe fixtures - supplied by the Cape Town branch of Robe's distributor DWR - followed a decision by their five multitasking, multi-skilled technical crew and the venue's production manager, Marisa Steenkamp.

The fixtures are constantly in active use across the different show and rehearsal spaces, helping facilitate The Baxter's diverse production schedule, which includes the annual Baxter Zabalaza Theatre Festival showcasing upcoming local talent. Many of their own produced shows also go on to tour internationally.



"We needed some small flexible lights and LEDBeam 150s were well-priced and ticked all the boxes," commented Benny Arendse from the tech crew, who was joined by his colleagues Franky Steyn and Julian Baeties for the interview.

lained that before they bought their own LEDBeam 150s, fixtures would sometimes be rented in if required, as was the case for a production of *Othello* lit by Patrick Curtis last year. It was after this that they decided to buy their own.

Everyone appreciates the additional scope and adaptability the LEDBeam 150s bring to the Baxter. They like the 60-degree zoom, which makes a very compact light extremely versatile as it can be used equally as effectively for a spot or a wash.



Franky mentions that the range of whites and the tungsten emulation effects are also very useful, adding that they stage numerous small shows “where it integrates perfectly into the rig and the available space.”

There are also some older Robe products in the house – two 600E Spots and four 600E Washes – which were among the Baxter’s first moving lights, and more recently, they invested in five Robe Spider LED wash beams.

“We don’t have so many moving lights here, but the ones we do have are good quality and make a real difference to how the shows can look, as well as giving great value,” notes Julian.

All three agreed that Robe products offer great reliability, engineering and creativity, and given that context, also great value.

All three of them work on lighting as well as tech’ing and rigging shows every day.



Benny has worked there for 17 years, Franky for 7, and Julian is currently the new boy with 2 years under his belt. All enjoy the great variety and range of shows, the teamwork and the spirit and soul of imagination and presenting great theatre in this lively environment.

The Baxter Theatre was opened in 1977 and is the most prolific in staging productions in Cape Town and the Western Cape. During the apartheid era in South Africa, it played a crucial role as a space for progressive, multiracial productions, benefiting from the university's academic freedom.

Photos: by Louise Stickland